

In Loving Memory Of
John Karl Chayka

Born

October 10, 1947
Washinton, D.C.

Died

June 12, 2025
Rapid City, SD

Celebration of Life

Monday, June 30, 2025, 11:00 a.m.
St. James Lutheran Church
Belle Fourche, South Dakota

Officiant

Vicar Ronda Mehrer
Synod Authorized Minister

Organist

Paula Speidell

Musical Selections

“Amazing Grace” “Go Rest High”

Honorary Pallbearers

Tim Chayka Mike Chayka Brandon Chayka
Brady Chayka Bryson Chayka Kaelee Chayka
Morgan Chayka Don McCrabb Leo Nelson
Jim Walker Jim Jacobs George Echino
Joe Echino

Final Military Honors

Ellsworth AFB Honor Guard
Spearfish Volunteer Honor Guard

Final Resting Place

Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota

The family invites you to join them for fellowship
and a meal at the church, following the service.
Thank you for your presence and condolences

In Loving Memory



John Karl Chayka

October 10, 1947 ~ June 14, 2025



John Karl Chayka, age 77, passed away peacefully at Monument Health Hospital in Rapid City SD with his family by his side.

John was born in Washington D.C. on October 10, 1947, to John Chayka and Margarete (Gebhardt) Chayka. The family lived in Washington D.C. and later moved to Forestville Maryland. He graduated from Suitland High School in 1968. Immediately after High school in July of 1968, John enlisted in the United States Air Force.

His military career started with Basic Training in San Antonio TX and Electronics School in Biloxi MS. His first Duty assignment was at Detachment 10 in Hastings NE where he met the love of his life,

Brenda. Shortly after meeting her, he received orders

for a 6-month tour in Vietnam. After John's return from Vietnam in 1971, John and Brenda continued their courtship where John had the privilege of escorting Brenda to her senior prom. They later married on November 26, 1971, in Glenvil Nebraska. They remained in Hastings NE where he finished his 4-year commitment with the Air Force.

In July 1972, John separated from the Air Force, and they moved to Forestville MD to be near his family. John became a pipefitter working for his uncle at Schweigert Inc. before being laid off due to the Trucker Strike of 1973. Living in Maryland proved to be difficult. John lost his mother in July of 1972, jobs were scarce, and after Brenda's car was stolen, Brenda told John "Take me home." (to NE). John re-enlisted with the Air Force in June of 1974 after persevering with determination to get himself 'back in shape' to re-enlist. He was re-stationed back in Hastings, NE in 1974.

Their son, Timothy James, was born on August 25th, 1975. In 1979, John was assigned to the 632 ASRT unit in Grafenwohr Germany. The family spent 3 years in Germany and did as much sight-seeing as possible with their German Family, Peter and Marianne, whom they rented an apartment from. They visited Holland, London, Austria and Switzerland visiting various famous landmarks. His next assignment took them to LaJunta, Colorado where their son, Michael John, was born on April 29th, 1984.

Belle Fourche SD became John's last assignment in 1987 at Detachment 21 in Colony WY where he worked at the Radar Stations that once existed across the plains. The town welcomed the Air Force Families and John became involved with the Fire Department, Saint James Lutheran Church where he was proud to serve on the Church Council as a Deacon, and many other special events of the community. In 1990, John and Brenda moved out of military housing and bought their first house in the wonderful neighborhood community of 12th Ave where many lifelong friends were made. John then retired from the Air Force that same year in July of 1990.



After retiring from the military, John went on to earn his associate's degree in accounting from Black Hills State University. During his College Days he drove the school bus for the Dakota Bus Company and drove a tour bus for the Homestake Mine Tours. He worked for a short time for Century 21 Real Estate and worked during the tax season's part time for Lange & Speidel Business and Tax, Tim Speidel Business & Tax for 24 years. He worked full time for American Colloid for several years during their time in Belle Fourche.



In 2020 John and Brenda made the decision to sell their home and move closer to their boys in the Summerset SD area. They found their dream house in Summerset located a few miles between both their boys and their families. This was a real blessing for John and Brenda. John became ill in March of 2025 and was diagnosed with cancer of the liver and a second cancer, lymphoma. John managed his diabetes for many years (he loved his sweets regardless!), developed hypertension, and was exposed to agent orange during his Vietnam days. John contracted pneumonia in his last days of fighting cancer and ultimately went to be with the Lord on the afternoon of June 14th surrounded by family.

John truly loved his family, being a grandpa, and providing outdoor toys for all to enjoy. He loved riding his Honda trike, camping, riding around the lake on a jet ski, putting around in the pontoon boat while Brenda fished, and riding his scooter around the campground giving rides to the grandkids. He had a love of gardening and was a master bean and tomato picker. He had a love for collecting and instilling in his grandchildren the appreciation and love of playing with train sets and had visited a variety of train yards across the US. He became a member of the Black Hills Railway Society after moving to Summerset. John was an avid dog lover and loved having his pup Jake at his heels. He was known for slipping treats to any dog that came across his path. In the end, John's true passion was being a patriot to the core. He loved sharing his love for the Air Force and his country, taking his family to every air show or museum he could, and talking for hours about each fighter jet and anything related to his military career (he had the gift of gab!). His favorite holidays were the 4th of July where he could express his patriotism and Christmas when he could decorate beyond measure and spoil his family.

John is survived by his loving wife, Brenda of 53 years, his two sons Tim Chayka and his wife Tara and their three boys Brandon Chayka and his wife Jasmine, Brady Chayka, and Bryson Chayka. Mike Chayka and his wife Andrea and their two girls Kaelee and Morgan Chayka. Brother-in-law George Echino, Brother and Sister-in-law Bruce and Marilyn Motley, stepsister Versalee (Barry) Estill, and many nieces and nephews, and of course his pup-Jake. He was preceded in death by his parents John and Margarete, stepmom Edith, sister Christine Echino, father and mother-in-law Cecil and Agnes Motley.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.